

[PUBLIC—No. 738—74TH CONGRESS]

[H. R. 8455]

AN ACT

Authorizing the construction of certain public works on rivers and harbors for flood control, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

DECLARATION OF POLICY

SECTION 1. It is hereby recognized that destructive floods upon the rivers of the United States, upsetting orderly processes and causing loss of life and property, including the erosion of lands, and impairing and obstructing navigation, highways, railroads, and other channels of commerce between the States, constitute a menace to national welfare; that it is the sense of Congress that flood control on navigable waters or their tributaries is a proper activity of the Federal Government in cooperation with States, their political subdivisions, and localities thereof; that investigations and improvements of rivers and other waterways, including watersheds thereof, for flood-control purposes are in the interest of the general welfare; that the Federal Government should improve or participate in

"In the years following passage of this law," wrote the Corps' historians, "the Corps built . . . 300–400 reservoirs whose primary benefit was flood control. However, it is inconceivable that these reservoirs would have been built had flood control been the only benefit. In the age of multipurpose projects, possible navigation, water storage, irrigation, power, and recreation benefits are considered before a final economic benefit figure can be reached."¹⁴

In answer to cries for federal help to fight floods, drought, and the Great Depression, the 1936 Flood Control Act created a massive program that would ultimately give birth to the Tulsa District.

THE SOUTHWESTERN

DIVISION. As the Corps began searching for the best flood control sites on the main tributaries of the Mississippi, a move was also afoot for a program for the same kind of control farther upstream.

Even the Engineers, said Kerr, "didn't envision the irresistible forces they were setting in motion. Nor did they remotely contemplate that this new approach would not stop until it had been carried to the ultimate — the watershed program on the farthest network of its upper tributaries."¹⁵

The 1936 Act authorized several levee projects and five reservoirs in the Arkansas River drainage basin: Great Salt Plains, John Martin (Caddoa), Fort Supply, Hulah, and Optima.

To oversee these projects, the Corps established on the first of July, 1937, the Southwestern Division office and the Little Rock District office. The Little Rock District was created from the shank of the Memphis District and included the territory that would soon become the Tulsa District. It included the Arkansas basin above Pine Bluff, the White River basin above Peach Orchard, Arkansas, and the Red above Fulton, Arkansas.